

The restrictions of the past months are slowly being eased and we are hearing a great deal about 'getting our lives back on track', 'getting back to normal', or finding 'the new normal' but as people with a concern for justice and peace, we cannot and must not return to life as it was before the onset of the virus, because for so many of our sisters and brothers here and around the world normal was not great, in fact normal was very bad. Many felt - and indeed were - excluded, neglected and ignored socially and politically, as well as in some of our places of worship.

As the 2020 NJPN Swanwick conference has now been re-scheduled for July 2021, it is important that we take time to reflect on the past few months and begin to re-imagine how, as a network, we contribute to building a better world for all people. The NJPN mini conference could be seen as the beginning of a process of discernment as we move into a time of great uncertainty and instability for our world.

The morning session opened with a reflection on Psalm 139 'O God you search me and you know me' beautifully sung by **Anna and Eleanor Marshall**. **Paul Bodenham** J&P worker in **Nottingham** hosted this session and asked that 'we listen with the ears of the heart' reminding us of the opening words of Gaudium et Spes:

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.

POPE PAUL VI, DECEMBER 7, 1965

On the 5th anniversary of Laudato Si' we can also recall Pope Francis' words:

"Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes, which cannot be separated and treated individually without once again falling into reductionism"

POPE FRANCIS (PARA: 70)

During this first session we heard from those who have been alongside some of the most vulnerable in our society as their pre-existing and newly emerging difficulties have now become ever more exposed. We heard from **Colette Joyce** from **Westminster J&P** about the homeless people she encountered whilst working at the feeding station set up in Trafalgar Square, a fantastic witness by people of different faiths working together for the common good. Whilst we were all being urged to stay at home and many homeless people were placed in hotels the plight of our sisters and brothers with no recourse to public funding became even more critical, evidence of the hostile environment where many seeking a place of safety barely exist, as one person commented 'living in the shadows'

Nick Hanrahan from the **Jesuit Refugee Service**, speaking from his experience of working alongside his refugee friends during the pandemic also emphasised the plight of those with no recourse to public funding, who are forbidden to work and the hostile environment in which many who have come to us seeking safety find themselves. Walking alongside refugee friends during the pandemic has been challenging, with the closing of the centre where many found pastoral support, friendship and opportunity to develop skills. Visits to those in detention centres cannot take place and Nick highlighted the difficulties in being alongside refugee

friends when the only contact is by telephone, when feelings of isolation and anxiety are increased.

JRS has become 'a mobile service, during the pandemic, providing food parcels and top up vouchers to those who are destitute. Many of the refugees belong to BAME community and are susceptible to the virus, have little access to ongoing healthcare and rely on agencies such as JRS for survival.'

Nick urged those concerned with justice and peace to speak up for those with no recourse to public funding.

We next heard from **Kevin Flanagan** from **St. Anthony's Centre for Church and Industry Trafford**. Work has continued throughout the past months and Kevin spoke about the current and long term effects of the pandemic on working people and families. Kevin reminded us of the requirements of Catholic Social Thinking in referring to Pope John Paul II, (*Centesimus Annus* 1991)

"Human work is probably the fundamental key to the whole social question"

Kevin went on to say that "marginalisation is linked to work or lack of work" and that job losses will increase as a result of COVID 19 and many more families will be living in poverty by the end of 2020. Kevin is convinced that the future for working people relies on training for work. Apprenticeships are key to enabling people to work but over the past years funding has been reduced and employers are reluctant to invest in training. Many young workers are employed in less secure areas of work, the arts, entertainment and hospitality and in the post pandemic workplace competition for available jobs will increase.

As members of the Church, Kevin believes that we should be calling for greater engagement with Catholic social teaching for both clergy and laity, we should be campaigning for fair and secure employment for all and working for a "radical and transformational Church that witnesses that which it preaches in a very radical way" Kevin concluded that it is not time to sit on the fence but is time for action.

The final speaker in our morning session was **Clare Dixon** Head of **CAFOD** - Latin America, who gave an overview of the international impact of COVID 19. All that has been experienced locally and nationally has been seen globally. Currently the greatest impact of the virus has been in the countries of Latin America where the impact of the infection has been under reported. The Church response has provided signs of hope for those living in impoverished communities where there is huge resilience and generosity. CAFOD and its partners invest in people and have been urged to re-purpose money in order to better respond to immediate need.

Countries in Africa will be increasingly affected, where there will be crises of hunger, lack of human rights and equality, poor governance and gender based violence, hence the launch of the DES emergency appeal.

Middle Eastern countries are facing the same issues, with under reporting of cases and lack of testing. In many situations lack of access to healthcare, political, social and economic injustice has devastating effect on already struggling communities. In the occupied territories of Palestine, demolition of homes have continued, without permits and people have no recourse to law as the

court system is closed down due to the virus.

Everything that is being experienced here is being experienced globally; there must be a strengthening of global solidarity.

In the breakout session which followed we were invited to reflect on **how we felt about what we had learned about those living on the margins of our society.**

The morning session ended with a hymn of repentance for all that shames our common humanity.

The lunch break provided an opportunity for informal discussion, to catch up with friends and to share information relating to issues and campaigns.

In the afternoon session we were asked to consider our response to what we had heard throughout the morning and how we move to an alternative model of being Church. Our speaker **Rev. Dr. Joseph O'Hanlon** began by reflecting on the "kingdom of God" as the key Gospel message and stated that as we move to a new place and time we must discover in "fresh fields and pastures new" the kingdom of justice, peace and love. Psalm 136 declares that

"his steadfast love endures forever"

We find God's love in a world where justice and peace flourish. God's justice is to be understood as righteousness and we were reminded that we are called to live righteously and act justly as

"we are built from the rock of God" (Isaiah 51:1)

Joseph went on to say that God's peace is a gift of 'wholeness, truth and steadfast love' to and for all people.

So how do we move into what must be a very uncertain future? Joseph reminded us of the many blessings found in the many small virtual communities of Church that have developed over the past months and how all who gathered "received the breath of the Holy Spirit in these troubled days" He emphasised that these Churches must not be seen as a 'stop gap' but we must consider what we have learned from these small 'house Churches' gathering as did communities in the early Church, and how the Holy Spirit is calling us to bring healing to our Church.

We must gather in a spirit of reconciliation and repent as communities of our structural and social sins. Joseph believes that in this way we can move forward as communities of justice and peace and "we can stop being tiny, individual candles, and become a huge Easter candle, lighting our world along the path of peace."

At the end of the Gospel according to Matthew we are told:

"and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."
 Matthew 28:20

The afternoon session opened and closed with prayer led by **Marty Haugen**, who has dedicated his new hymn 'For our Common Home' to the work and witness of the National Justice and Peace Network. We thank Marty for this wonderful gift.

After the meeting ended participants were invited to stay for an informal networking session to share information relating to events and campaigns and issues of interest as well as to catch up with many friends and colleagues whose company we value and have missed.

Anne Peacey



Due to the changing nature of events through Covid 19, please see our e-bulletin or website for diary dates
www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

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The National Justice & Peace Network welcomes all who share a vision of a world in which people live in peace and harmony, where our common humanity is respected and all are able to contribute freely to the common good. NJPN seeks to encourage work for justice and peace by promoting communication and shared action between members, supporters and partners.

This newsletter is produced three times a year by the Network.

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Membership is open to local groups, families and individuals. Individual Subscription only £25 a year (but you are welcome to give more!) Low Income £15. Download a membership form from the website, contact the office or Ann Kelly, Membership Development, membership@justice-and-peace.org.uk



Justice & Peace

News from National Justice & Peace

Autumn 2020

A Prayer for Wellbeing

God of wellbeing.
 Teach me how to flourish.
 Help me to nourish the unique strengths you have woven into my character.
 Show me those relationships in my life that make my spirit sing with joy.
 Teach me to engage in activities that send my soul into flow.
 Open my heart to the signs of true beauty and goodness all around me.
 Encourage me to practise positive emotions of gratitude, generosity and love.
 Draw me to seek true meaning
 In the daily choices I make with my time and energy.
 Move me to experience a sense of accomplishment when each task is complete.
 And finally, help me always to practise forgiveness towards those who have hurt or offended me in the past, or might do so in the future.
Amen

Written by Leonie Martin whilst on retreat at St Beuno's Jesuit Spirituality Centre in North Wales in September 2020

Dates for the postponed 42nd Annual Justice & Peace Conference



The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire

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The Justice and Peace Refugee Project during the coronavirus pandemic

For over 19 years the Justice and Peace refugee project in Newcastle has been welcoming asylum seekers. About 300 people attend weekly. Those going through the asylum process get a bag of groceries each week; groceries which are donated from over 80 parishes across the diocese. Our asylum seekers who have exhausted the asylum process but who feel unable to return to their birthplace also receive £25 a month. This is not much, but when you have "no recourse to public funds" you really are destitute and reliant on the kindness of friends and strangers.



network of dioceses, we found out about a system of buying supermarket vouchers which could be sent to someone's phone. The diocesan finance department actioned this....and our part time project worker working with our treasurer sent them out.

We joined up with another refugee project that were doing home deliveries to asylum seekers and donated some of our food stocks to them. We also gave food to the local foodbank who said they would be able

to provide food bags to our service users. We liaised with the local council; we joined fortnightly Zoom meetings of all the local refugee support agencies.

Then it all changed.....

Throughout March we become increasingly aware of the coronavirus pandemic. We put in precautions around hand washing, social distancing. We could no longer offer teas and coffees. We had to ask our volunteers over 70 to no longer attend. There was a feeling of sadness, but also a determination not to abandon the people who use our service.

On March 23rd, we had to face the inevitable and close. Anyone who came that day was given extra groceries and was reassured that we would try and provide some sort of service. With a heavy heart we locked up, unsure what would happen next.

Well what happened next was a flurry of emails, Zoom meetings and phone calls.

We started a letter writing campaign via the diocesan website to ask our MPs and councillors to ensure that the promise of government and council support for those people in the destitute category would actually be fulfilled.

We explored many ways of getting support out to our vulnerable people. Then through the Caritas

We put out an appeal across our diocese for financial support so we could continue to provide supermarket vouchers....to date over £17,000 has been donated from parish groups and individuals. We have also been successful in being awarded a grant from The Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation which means we can extend our support to those, who although have some public funds support are living on around £38 a week.

So what has this taught me? It has confirmed for me just how fragile are the lives of our most vulnerable asylum seekers. It has made me realise that no one organisation can do everything: but by focusing on the needs of this vulnerable group of people and then by building up links with other organisations and mutually supporting one another we can help, even when usual methods are no longer possible.

It has made me realise that that there is a huge groundswell of support and sense of justice out there. Most people really DO CARE. They just need a way to turn that care into action.

Liz Archibald
Hexham & Newcastle J&P Coordinating Council

Steve Atherton retires as J&P Fieldworker for Liverpool Archdiocese

Steve has been a wonderful supporter of NJPN, sharing his time, experience, expertise and resources. He was a member of the executive between June 2005 to June 2008.

Steve always made himself cheerfully available to promote, accommodate and help to organise J&P events held by our partner organisations.

We were able to work closely with Steve when planning for the justice section of the parallel programme at the Eucharistic Congress in Liverpool.

Over the years Steve has been involved with

planning and being very much a participant in the Swanwick Conference, including our now re-scheduled 2020 event. Together with his family, Steve was a familiar face in the 'Just Fair' with a stall in support of the Palestinian people. He was also an active member of the 6-monthly Fieldworkers' meetings and was very supportive of other J & P fieldworkers.

We send our very best wishes to Steve and his family, hoping that he enjoys a happy and fulfilling retirement.

Thank you Steve for all your support and commitment to NJPN.



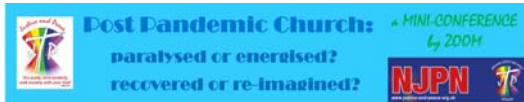
NJPN AGM rearranged to Saturday 21st November Networking Day 11.00 am - 3.00 pm on Zoom. Book via eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/njpn-agm-networking-day-tickets-121751701617>

Post Pandemic Church: a place of reconciliation and healing

In the Reign of God:

...the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.....
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert,

Isaiah 35: 5, 6



words of Mary Grey:

'In the coupling of the healing of people and healing of earth, Isaiah gives the basis of a spirituality of hope'

(The Outrageous pursuit of hope: Mary C. Grey DLT 2000)

Members of NJPN Executive met via zoom in early September for three days of planning, following our successful mini zoom conference in July.

As a networking organisation rooted in the Gospel and in Catholic Social Teaching, we returned to our source seeking inspiration and hope.

We listened with the ears of many years of life experience to the wonderful words from Gaudium et Spes stating very clearly how for the followers of Christ,

'Theirs is a community composed of people. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for everyone. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with all humanity and its history by the deepest of bonds'

(Gaudium et Spes para: 1)

We recognised that although written more than fifty years ago these words are equally relevant today and link very much to Pope Francis' vision for people of God, as set out in Laudato 'Si

'Human interdependence and the common good, today takes on an increasingly universal complexion and consequently involves rights and duties with respect to the whole human race'

(Gaudium et Spes para: 26)

What are the signs of our times? Around our world we see fear, resentment, anger, blame, fierce nationalism, helplessness and despair, insecurity and violent reactions.

Where do we see the Spirit moving? As people of faith we know that the Spirit is active in our world but moving in unexpected ways, working in places we may never know. The challenge for each of us as individuals, as communities of faith and as NJPN is to discern what is our direction of travel.

We must ask ourselves searching questions as to our role in this process of reconciling and healing. How do we help build communities of sharing and wisdom?

NJPN is rooted in the gospel and in CST, therefore we travel in hope. We are called by our baptism to be people of hope, to promote hope, to promote a gentler more kindly world. Being a prophetic voice is burdensome but our strength is in our calling and when we share our vision we allow hope to flourish. We recalled the

Our vision, mission and values are unchanged and can be seen on our website. The key areas of concern continue to be the environment, movement of people, peace and inequality. We recognise that part of our role is to bring people together, sharing information and supporting action and campaigns initiated by partners and allies and that in all areas of activity we are more effective when linking with partners and allies. It was felt that we must focus on issues rather than specific campaigns, thus recognising that people have different ways of demonstrating their passionate feelings around important issues. We must always seek for and communicate the truth in any situation. We committed to shared mission and spent time identifying partners and allies linked to the key areas of concern.

Key to the success of any network is communication and we considered how we become more effective communicators, more of a prophetic radical voice. We have the tools, open meetings, newsletter, e-Bulletin, website as well as our Facebook and Twitter pages. We resolved to become more effective communicators of the Gospel message, beginning with our September open meeting focussing on racial injustice and inequality followed in November with the focus on the likely increase in homelessness and growing poverty as a result of the coronavirus.

NJPN is concerned about the current status of justice and peace within our diocesan and parish structures and in discussion with our membership coordinator we considered how we place ourselves as a prophetic voice for the common good when so many of our brothers and sisters are facing uncertainty, unemployment, inequality, racial injustice, homelessness and increasing poverty.

We all have our part to play in building a 'Post Pandemic Church' but what must this energised and re-imagined Church look like? During our conference in July we were reminded of words from the Gospel according to St Mark.

'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand'

Mark 1:15

We were asked to imagine what the world would be like if God's rule ran throughout the universe and the answer given was - Justice and Peace. A huge challenge and we pray that the Holy Spirit will guide and sustain us in our endeavours.

Anne Peacey

RIP... Maureen Matthews

Anne Peacey Chair of NJPN writes:

I worked with Maureen for many years when she was NJPN Administrator between 1996 and 2007. During this time we were greatly supported and often 'carried' by her



skill, commitment and enthusiasm. Maureen worked to coordinate the preparation for each of 11 NJPN Conferences during that time and her administrative and organisational skills contributed greatly to the success of the Conferences. She was also responsible for editing and producing our NJPN newsletter, a huge task and the extent of which we may not fully appreciate. She also helped to develop the NJPN website. Maureen established and helped to develop an email link group through which members can receive regular updates on a range of issues relating to justice and peace. In addition to the regular administrative tasks relating to NJPN meetings and events Maureen gave much of her time to creating valuable resources for NJPN. She produced a range of cards, posters, bookmarks, banners and flags all which are a source of income for NJPN as well as visually enhancing our gatherings. Maureen also represented NJPN at a European level and established many international links.

Thirteen years on, we note that although Maureen had been very unwell for some time her involvement with justice and peace never wavered. She was unable to attend the NJPN conference in 2019 but was determined to be present this year and was one of the first to return her booking form. In

fact, a webinar replaced the postponed conference. She had a keen eye for detail and was most particular when hanging the rainbow drapes - to represent God's Covenant with Creation - on the stage. There are many who will have known Maureen much more closely than I did but I have only happy memories of shared experiences and meals at both our homes. What I can say she was totally committed to NJPN and felt our network should strive to be the 'go to place' the 'one stop shop' for Justice and Peace'. Rest in peace Maureen.

Marian Thompson writes: Maureen and David live about 3 miles away and so I have worked with them both over the years within many local community groups. Both Maureen and I have represented our churches on Marple Area Churches Together (oddly due to quirky boundaries the two catholic churches we represented are in different Dioceses!). We both took our turn as Chair of Churches Together (Maureen in 1998 and again in 2012). In 1998 Maureen decided to form an ecumenical J & P group and together we have both been involved in this ever since. At our last meeting before lockdown, the last time I saw Maureen, we were discussing if we needed to make changes in future to attract people from further afield. This may be the way forward in the new future. Over the years, apart from the ongoing letter writing, contacting our MP, Fairtrade and other stalls etc., the group planned several study days and invited the whole local community. One on dementia led to Maureen and some others helping to establish a local Dementia Group which was meeting weekly until Corvic-19 ended all social activities.

How I became involved with Palestine

I first travelled to the West Bank, Palestine, for Christmas in 2004, when five of us from the UK joined Dutch and German Pax Christi members to stay with families in Bethlehem. The Arab Education Institute, a Pax Christi partner group, hosted our visit which was to be a huge learning curve for me. Every person we met had a story that told of cruel violations of international law and denials of human rights. From the families we learnt of the extreme violence suffered during the Second Intifada, of the endless curfews, of bullets coming in through their windows, of having to sleep huddled in the very cold, but more secure area, under the stairs and of how the father of our host family was shot in the neck while boarding a bus to try and get to work. Surprisingly, he survived but suffered the consequences ever afterwards. It reminded me so much of a visit to South Africa in the late 1980s.

Since the creation of Israel in 1947 and the Israeli occupation in 1967 Palestine has suffered ever increasing loss of land and much violence from both the Israeli military and illegal Israeli settlers. It was clear that Palestinians have no power and no voice and feel totally isolated. We listened to people's stories and told these stories to people at home as we wanted to show our solidarity and challenge the injustices they suffer.

I made several return visits and was then privileged to serve as an Ecumenical Accompanier, on the World Council of Churches Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). I lived with three other accompaniers in Yanoun, in the north of the West Bank, near Nablus, a tiny village with a population reduced to 35. These families have lived in the valley for generations and are dependent on their sheep, goats, and olive trees. They live very simple lives but today their livelihood is severely threatened by the loss of about 80% of their land and the violence of the Israeli settlers who surround them. EAs are Human Rights Observers, reporting to the UN and to their respective governments, work alongside Palestinian and Israeli Peacemakers and undertake advocacy wherever they can. Our village families used to say, 'When we see you, we feel safe. Your cameras and pens are more powerful than their guns.'

From our village, we monitored many surrounding villages and herding families in the Jordan Valley. We saw crops burnt in fields, ancient olive trees cut down, Stars of David painted on Palestinian homes, homes trashed or totally demolished by invading Israeli military and heard about detained family members. Families lived in constant fear.

I usually return to Palestine once, and sometimes twice a year, to do a week's 'cover' as an EA, to listen to our friends and partners and to show our solidarity with them. At home we get news from them every day and can see that the situation gets increasingly worse. There are well over 500,000 illegal Israeli settlers living in the West Bank, the theft of Palestinian land is huge, house demolitions take place every day and thousands of Palestinians have demolition orders on their homes and animal shelters. People, including children, are arrested, detained and tortured without trial and held, against international law, in Israeli prisons. The Israeli military, armed with the latest weapons, attack unarmed children, women and men on a daily basis and we see, and have been with, school children on their way to and from home when they have been attacked with tear gas for no reason other than that they were there.

To add to all this, the separation barrier prevents freedom of movement, access to education, worship, education and health care. Water and electricity are rationed by the Israeli firms that control them, whilst settlements have unrestricted and cheaper provision of vital resources.

We have a gospel calling to work for justice and faced with injustices by the people who have become our friends, it becomes paramount to hear their call and to work with all those in Palestine and Israel who work for an end to the occupation and justice for all in Palestine and Israel. We can stand in solidarity with the Israeli Women in Black in Jerusalem and with Combatants for Peace and members of Breaking the Silence, former Israeli soldiers speaking out against the actions of their government, with Rabbis for Human Rights, B'Tselem and ICAHD, all of whom are regarded as traitors in their own country and need our support. We can work with Palestinians and local support and activist groups who raise awareness and advocate for justice. We can continue to raise awareness wherever we can and contact our MPs asking for our government to hold to account all those violating international law. The WCC theme for the 2020 Week for Peace for Palestine and Israel is, 'Creative Solidarity in Common Fragility', a theme that we

can take up for all our work for justice, whatever and wherever it may be and we pray that we will all try to, 'Do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.' Micah 6:8.



Monitoring human rights - collecting evidence in Khirbet Tana February 2011

Ann Farr



Last year I was asked to share a reflection for this year's Olive Calendar. Here are my thoughts which were then edited to fit the November's page of the calendar:

I first started coming to Palestine with pilgrimage groups, during my first stay in Bethlehem I visited the YMCA Shepherds Fields site, where I picked up a leaflet about sponsoring an Olive Tree. I also heard about the Olive Picking and thought that would be a great thing to do. For the next few years I came back to the Holy Lands of Palestine, Israel and Jordan several times a year helping lead pilgrimages until one year I was free in the October so decided to join the JAI Olive Picking. After one trip I was hooked, though I already had met many Bethlehem residents and had made friendships, this experience brought it to a whole new level. Staying with a Family in Beit Sahour I learned so much more about the situation from the personal points of view, whilst the geopolitical visits and talks gave a more generalized insight. Our encounters with the farmers in whose fields we picked brought home the reality of living with a settlement or the apartheid wall being built on your ancestral land. I now make my annual pilgrimage by coming out for a couple of days before the programme starts and staying an extra couple of days to visit the Holy sites, but essentially my real pilgrimage is up an olive tree encountering God through my encounters with the land and the people of Palestine. Father Bargil Pixner, a Benedictine monk in Jerusalem's Dormition Abbey wrote: "Five gospels record the life of Jesus. Four you will find in books and one you will find in the land they call holy. Read the fifth gospel and the world of the four will open to you".

For me my annual pilgrimage to this Holy Land to join the Olive Harvest helps me to read the fifth gospel and so to try and live the other four.

Last week I got the news, due to the second Israeli lockdown and the continued ban on "tourists" entering Israel as part of their Covid restrictions, this year's Olive Picking Program is cancelled. I can only hope and pray that we will be able to go out for the Planting in February.

Staff at the JAI have purchased 20,000 trees for planting next year, but while international activists and media are diverted by Covid so many trees have been uprooted by settler violence and so much land confiscated by the Israeli authorities.

Please pray for the 'Peace of Jerusalem'

Geoff Thompson



'This is Justice & Peace'

leaflet for groups.

With space to add local contacts. Donation plus p+p



If you have items for the NJPN ebulletin or Calendar please send them direct to Sharon:

ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org.uk